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ARMOR IN DECORATION.

BY W. L. D. O'GRADY.



IN previous articles more was said of arms than armor, possibly because armor to the modern mind is a matter of secondary importance, and also because the subject of arms is so fascinating, that while volumes can be and are written about them, it is difficult to bring into small compass even such a limited view of them as their use in decoration.

Every new rifle has a literature of its own. "The Sword" is the title of a charming work by the famous Hadji Burton, the Bombay Captain, who has penetrated to Mecca, and wields the Arab scimitar, or Cuban machete, or Scottish claymore, and the tongues of many tribes and nations with equal and unsurpassed vigor and grace.

The full page examples of armor and arms in this number give some splendid specimens of the most ornate styles of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries, masterpieces of Milan or possibly

not considered, trophies should be strictly classed, but this museum-like arrangement is not within the power of every one.

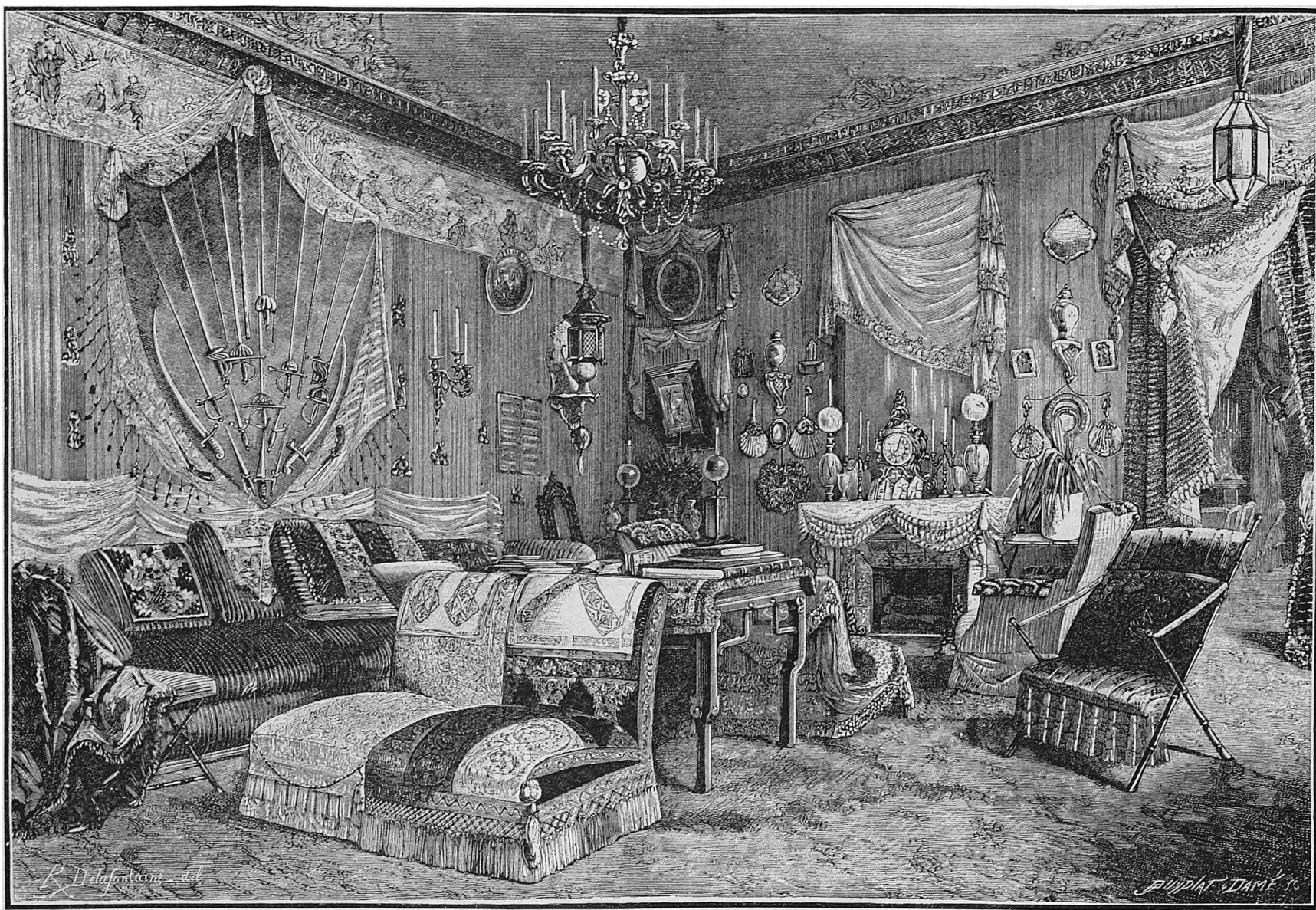
It would be interesting to illustrate the whole history of man's efforts for personal immunity in the roughest of pursuits, the slaughter of his fellow man, and this, by the way, has never yet been completely managed in even the most extensive of armories. It is queer to observe how a reaction in favor of certain types continually goes on. The primitive hide of buffalo or beef has reappeared again and again in the buff coat of the Cavalier and Roundhead and the trusty targe of the Highlander, while before and after it have alternated plate, chain, and scale armor. The last, which according to early Assyrian monuments, Etruscan and Greek vases, and Egyptian wall paintings, was chiefly a favorite of the Persians, as it was more recently of the Japanese, but never seemed to make much way elsewhere. The battle has been between plate and chain. The linked raiment of the Crusaders of Circassian and Turkomans, and the Arabs who fought under Mohammed, and the Caliphs, was imitated by Cromwell privately under his official outer garniture, and, it is said, by Napoleon the Great.

Not two months ago I saw a peddler hawking about a sort of gymnastic belt of alleged tempered

supplement their bayonets. We believe in cold steel, sir!"

The unhappy peddlers of bullet-proof vests were, like the embalmers who thrust their professional cards in our faces on the eve of every serious engagement, objects of detestation with us. One or two were privily waylaid and more or less surreptitiously tossed in blankets.

We had a mild sort of a Judas among us, a "fresh" and very young lieutenant—who, by the way, with five brothers, fought gallantly and died for the country—and he was tempted to get a monitor, as the things were called. It was winter and his deviating from the unwritten rules of his comrades was concealed by buttoned overcoats, but suspicion fell on him. A mysterious and abnormal stiffness of the torso did not seem to coincide with the juvenile grace of his lower limbs; and one night when he slumbered a raid was made; the vest was found, confiscated, and removed a mile to the rear of our winter quarters, where the moon shed its beams on a laughing crowd of officers who returned something like a sieve to the despoiled tent of the still sleeping warrior shortly afterwards. It is very difficult to make armor bullet-proof, while comparatively easy to provide an excellent protection against edge or point of pike, sword, or dagger.



MME. ADAMS SALON, PARIS. AN EXAMPLE OF ARMOR IN DECORATION.

of Toledo, as a rule, though the headpiece in the upper right hand corner has a Teutonic character about it. Just about the time when the artistic armorer was arriving at the perfection of his mystery and producing the most elegantly embossed and engraved suits of tempered plate, the style in England and Germany, never very elaborate and evidencing its unmistakable intention for use, not show, became plainer than ever, till it culminated in the black cuirasses of German Swatzreiters and Cromwell Ironsides.

In setting up trophies of arms, it is well in even the most eclectic collections to preserve the unities, and where pieces of the same nation and period are not placed together, they should, at least, so balance each other as not to produce a sense of want of harmony.

There is manifest discord in the juxtaposition of one of those odd lobster-like encasings of a Japanese warrior, and the accurately fitting, almost foppish, mail of a modern Circassian, and yet the defence of the Mongol and the Dagh, as that of the old Crusaders, is made usually of chains. Of course, where space and expense are

bronze, which was declared to be rifle-proof, and a most desirable addition to the wardrobes of policemen, bartenders, gamblers, or others whose occupations or pleasures might lead them in danger of visceral laceration by the ready revolver.

It put me in mind of an invulnerable vest which was, for a brief season, hawked about the Army of the Potomac. It was warranted, of course, to protect every vulnerable part of the person except the head. It was elegantly upholstered with brass buttons, and was intended to represent an ever-unwrinkled United States Army vest. Its rigidity betrayed the wearers at once, and while some corps adopted it pretty freely after pay day, others affected to scorn it as a cowardly device.

I happened to belong to one of these latter, the General of our brigade being so Quixotically anxious to achieve a reputation for dare devilry for himself and men, that he positively declined to accept rifles for them, declaring that "my men will have such close fighting that ball and buck in smooth bore muskets will be sufficient to

In an old country, where the gentry are practically of one religion, as in England, and the churches are the most ancient and unchanged of buildings, there are most interesting specimens of old armor. The slab which records the virtue of some long mouldered knight of high degree, is overshadowed by his helm and gloves, and often by the entire suit he wore in life.

Sometimes these relics of families which have died out are greatly rusted, till little but the shell remains, but are left undisturbed as something to be proud of by successive generations of rectors and sextons. In other cases, the families religiously devote certain days in the year to polishing up the old harness which they will not suffer any but their own aristocratic fingers to touch.

Except a few thousand swords and arquebuses that did—or did not—come over with the Mayflower, we have few such relics, and we have still a wide world of curiosities to choose from, and if we take a little trouble to learn how to avoid incongruity, we shall enjoy our possessions the more. There are to-day in an up-town emporium



Relics of
Ancient
ARMOR

ARMOR FOR DECORATION.

of beautiful things, if they are not sold before this is read, some superb shields and headpieces with finest steel ringed capes, damascened almost microscopically with gold and silver in the most exquisite taste. They bear the marks of great antiquity, and are beyond the imitative capabilities of Birmingham.

It would be a joy to find them in the possession of an appreciative owner. They would give pleasure to every one privileged to look on them, but it is perfectly possible that they may fall into the hands of some long-pursed Philistine who will straightway hire some professional picture hanger to stick them up in esthetic shapes, and a jumble of all sorts of ancient and modern stuff, gathered heterogeneously from China to Peru may set the teeth of the most polite of experts on edge if they cannot be good-natured or philosophical enough to veil their wrath by covert smiles.

The other day, in a tailor's shop, I saw a trophy that irresistibly drew me from across a broad thoroughfare. There were cuirasses, helmets, pikes, and what not, every item of which, except the head of a Lochabar axe, which had been duplicated in the most glaring way, was evidently bogus. The shafts of the halberds, purporting to be Spanish or French, were of hickory, which, in the days of Francis the First of France was, probably, as unknown in Europe as the potato or tobacco, and the artificially faded fringe was of window sash cord that was of distinctively recent date.

We cannot all enjoy the depths of enjoyment to be found in Wagner's music, and may even feel wearied by too scientific explorations in botany, but any one capable of delight in even a jig or a waltz of simplest melody, or the color and fragrance of a wild rose, should feel an abhorrence to the patent sham which Philistinism encourages in everything and not least in anything of archeological interest.

An oddity in decoration was recently seen that may prove useful in a few cases, and the principle might be otherwise applied, though it is obviously artificial. It is the hanging, with drapery, of panels of a paneled room, or large blank spaces of wall without panels; in other words, curtains are hung against squares of blind wall. This is a revival of the arras, which was used even as late as the last century; but it is merely an effect without a cause, for the arras had a purpose, either that of concealing an unornamental wall or serving as a portière to close some corridor or recess. A plush, lace or silken curtain has, to most people, an unpleasantly artificial effect, as if the decorator wished to be artistic, but did not know how. I could mention a theatre parquette which was decorated with lace curtains, caught back by knots of pink ribbon. The cheap prettiness of this sort of thing is allowable, if anywhere, in a lady's boudoir, but out of place in any public hall, created so much adverse comment, that the decorations were materially altered at the close of the season, and the curtains were removed. As a rule, a curtain, no matter of what material, implies concealment of some sort. The portières at our doors augment the privacy of a room. The lace at our windows filters the sunlight, that might else be too glaring, and also bars the view from the street into our rooms by day. Heavier window curtains conceal the lighted

rooms from the intrusive gaze of passers-by at night. Bed curtains—unhealthy things that have been, fortunately, done away with—rendered perfect the seclusion of the sleeper. Curtains hung before book-cases and cabinets, keep out moths and dust, and prevent too free handling of the treasures they conceal. But a curtain hung flatly against a wall implies nothing, and conceals nothing that there is reason to conceal. Its only excuse is, that its color and texture may be beautiful. In studios one not infrequently finds tapestries and such things hung against walls and used to partition off small corners, but as there is variety and intrinsic beauty in them, they serve the purpose of pictures. One artist in New York has almost covered one wall of his painting room with the gorgeous silken robes of Japanese daimios, not hung stiffly, like curtains, but grouped and arranged in easy folds, as flags are commonly grouped about a trophy. Secured against them is a centre piece, composed of Oriental arms

our houses, suggests the inquiry if it is not time for the large cities of our middle States to emulate the example of European and New England cities in the matter of watering our streets. If we cannot have clean streets, we might at least have the dust laid. In New York and Brooklyn the condition of the thoroughfares, except in a few favored localities occupied by people of wealth and influence, is simply disgraceful. Injury to furniture, carpets, clothing, pictures, and ornaments from street dust in these two cities alone, amounts to thousands of dollars yearly; carpets, curtains, portières and the like becoming so grimy and faded that they have to be retired months, if not years, before they show much signs of wear. Besides, there is the physical and even mental discomfort of being surrounded by dirt throughout the summer. If double windows, drawn curtains and closed shutters are the only effective means of stopping the ingress of dust, one might as well live in a cave as in the stuffiness and airlessness

occasioned by these protections. Even our windows are covered with minute scratches caused by the attrition of granite particles whirled against them by every wind, and they lose their clearness in consequence. Dust is an unnatural thing, a result of civilization, and men who raise it could lay it if they would. It is a thing for municipal authorities rather than private citizens to remedy, and as the fresh or salt water supply in the vicinity of most large cities is practically inexhaustible, this ruinous dust could be kept down at a trifle of expense. Wall decorations, frescos, and rich papers, that now grow dim and lose their brilliancy and beauty in a few years, could then be depended on to last as long as the decorations that travelers still admire in the old convents, halls, and churches of Germany, France and Italy.

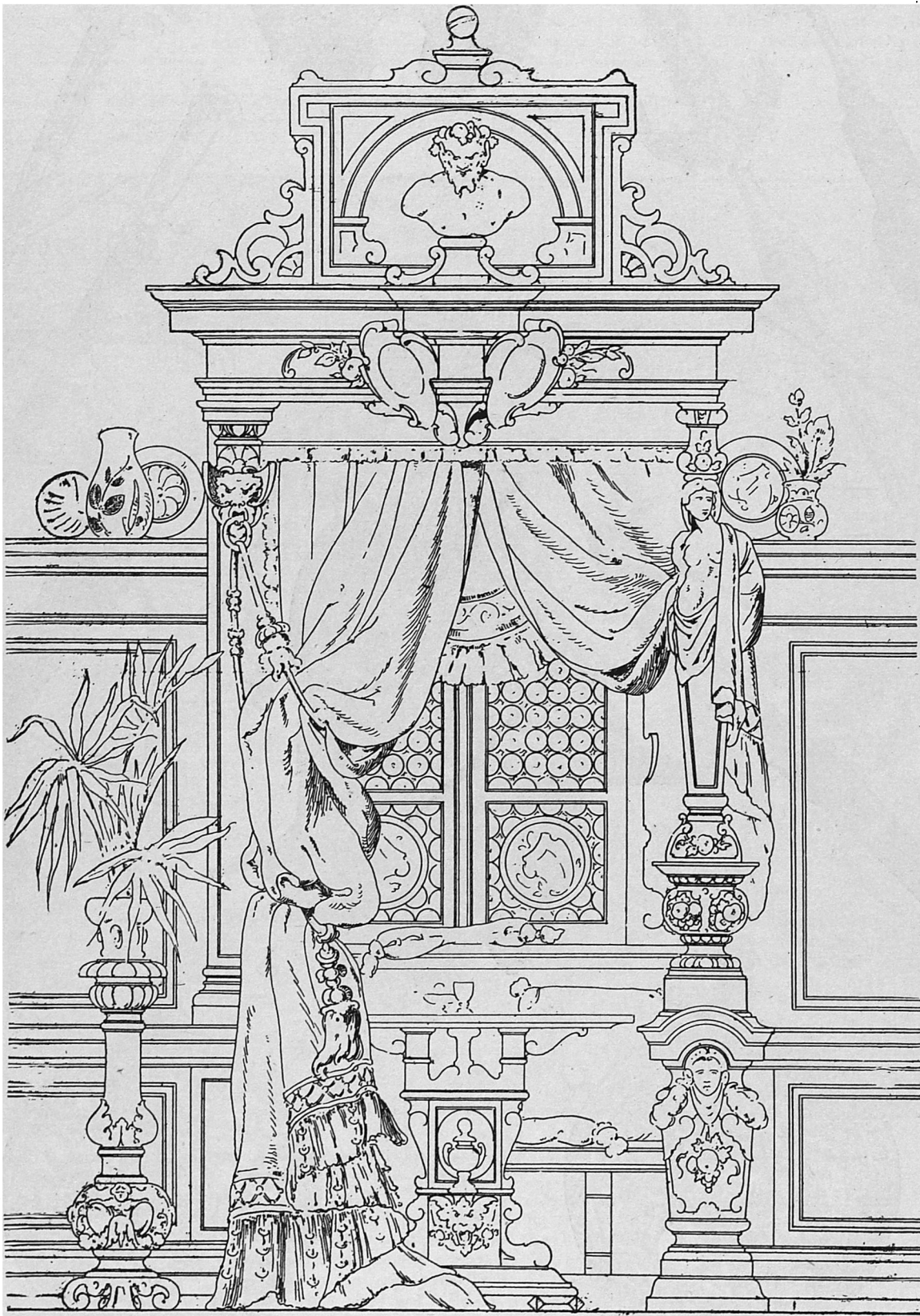
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A CHARMING idea that probably will, when known, achieve much popularity is the embroidering of little ornamental articles like watch cases, slippers, bracket lambrequins, smoking caps, and neck-ties with hair from the heads of Nice Girls. Of course, things decorated in this manner would have, for gentlemen recipients, a value beyond money, and ungallant indeed would that man be who would ever lay one of them aside among the cast-off remnants of his house-keeping. A Turkish fez, to be worn for a smoking cap, with threads of delicate gold woven in a pattern about its edge, a watch pocket in some light colored silk or velvet, with lines of glossy black and brown traced through it. What prettier souvenir from the

best girl in the world could a man desire than such a thing?

IN the fitting up of mercantile offices and in elevators, brass has been put to account in grills, which besides having a lightsome appearance, contrast well with the dark hue of the wood. It is admirably adapted for bordering the panels of semi-translucent or opaque screens, the former of heavy striated glass.

IN pleasing applications is that of heavy striated colored glass to brass screens. In the rich wood, plain and carved, so extensively introduced into commercial offices, brass grills, filled or open, have come into extensive use.



SUGGESTIONS FOR WINDOW DRAPERY.

and armor. "What dust catchers!" the housewife will exclaim. True, but artists are not housewives, as a rule, and the picturesqueness of disorder, and even of dirt, has a fascination for some of them, that thrifty women folk cannot understand, and would not submit to. The curtain decoration scheme above mentioned contemplates the draping of the mantel either with two sets of curtains, one depending from the cornice and terminating at the shelf, and the other hanging from the shelf to the floor, or with a long pair of curtains reaching from cornice to floor, and folded back at the ends of the mantel.

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THE damage occurring every summer to our furniture and decorations, and everything else in